Samuel M. Green

Brooklin, Maine

BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN WATERCOLORS

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TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN WATERCOLORS

November 2, 1973 — December 9, 1973

Bowdoin College Museum of Art

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FOREWORD

The collection of Mr. and Mrs. Olin C. Robison inspired this exhibition. Their interest in the work of Samuel Green aroused my curiosity in recent watercolors and Mr. Green's role relative to them. Because my own career choice was greatly influenced by Mr. Green, it seemed appropriate to include these works in my inaugural exhibition at Bowdoin. I am deeply indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Robison and Mr. Green for all their encouragement and help in making the exhibition possible.

My special thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. Tessim Zorach and Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Ipcar for their thoughtful gift of a William Zorach watercolor, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Carey of Salisbury, Maryland, for the four watercolors they have donated. This gift grew from Mr. Carey's fondness for Brunswick which developed while on a tour of duty at the Naval Air Station in 1943. I am grateful to have a new gift by old friends of the Museum, the Zorachs, as well as from new friends, the Careys.

Many have loaned works by Mr. Green. I sincerely appreciate the fine cooperation of the many private lenders and the public museums — the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Mr. Daniel Robbins, Director; Smith College Museum of Art, Mr. Charles Chetham, Director; and The Hopkins Center Art Galleries, Dartmouth College, Mr. Truman H. Brackett, Director — who have contributed to the show. It is a great personal pleasure to present works owned by Mr. and Mrs. Morton W. Briggs, Mrs. Victor L. Butterfield, Dr. and Mrs. C. B. Crampton, Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. D'Oench, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. José D. Gómez-Ibáñez, Mr. H. -R. Hitchcock, Mr. and Mrs. Louis O. Mink, Professor and Mrs. Adolph F. Pauli, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Rosenbaum, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wilbur and Mr. Theodore Williamson. Many have been personal friends and teachers of mine.

Finally, I wish to thank those who have made special loans available: the Whitney Museum of American Art, whose Curator, Mr. Robert Doty, arranged to send three important works; the Wadsworth Atheneum, whose Director, Mr. James Elliott, and Curator, Mr. Peter Marlow, made available the Hopper watercolor; and the Museum of Art of Ogunquit, from whom the Charles Burchfield picture was borrowed through the kindness of Mr. Henry Strater. These works add an important dimension to the exhibition.

R. Peter Mooz
Director

INTRODUCTION

Some exhibitions are planned to instruct the viewer about a certain artist's development, a period of art, or an iconographical theme. Other exhibitions are designed to excite the eye and provide an enjoyable aesthetic experience. The present exhibition attempts to instruct and to excite to some extent, but more than this, it is the story of a collection: Twentieth Century American Watercolors at Bowdoin College.

No attempt has been made here to survey American watercolors. This has been done quite recently by the Birmingham Museum of Art and earlier by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Only six outside loans have been included other than the Samuel Green pictures. Our purpose is to reveal the continuing growth of the collection at the Museum and place on view new additions to it.

Wash drawings were included in the original Bowdoin bequest to the Museum in 1811, but the earliest watercolor donated to the collection was Winslow Homer's *After the Hunt*. This gift by the Misses Walker was an auspicious beginning, as Homer is perhaps now recognized as the greatest and best-known American master of the medium. Albert Ten Eyck Gardner even observed, "Homer's watercolors, with their brilliantly controlled technique, and their individual color harmony and their unhackneyed subject matter have survived the passage of time and retained the active interest of the artist's many admirers. . . . They seem to possess a perpetual modernity and liveliness that puts them in a very special category all their own."

Some have said that Homer is the father of American watercolor. Before Homer, the American watercolor was often a study for a larger work or a fast color sketch to be painted in oil at a later time in the studio. Homer, along with others of his day, made the watercolor an end in itself. Homer traveled to many different locales. They all inspired him. But, whether in the Caribbean or Maine, Tynemouth or the Adirondacks, he imbued all his works with the same directness of observation, clear structure of form and celebration of light. The best American watercolorists have followed his lead.

A few years later the Misses Walker also gave the La Farge watercolor. This picture reveals him as a master, too, but La Farge's style is more controlled. Oriental art, which played a role in Homer's work, is more consciously felt in La Farge's art. Finally, La Farge, like Homer, had a marked ability to capture light effects but handled them differently, perhaps because of his work with stained glass windows.

The French Impressionist style also influenced American watercolor to a considerable extent. It contributed to the general loosening of brushstrokes and immediacy of painting which occurred about the turn of the century. The works of Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent and Maurice Prendergast offer perfect testimony. Sargent is an especially interesting watercolorist. His paintings in watercolor were usually done as a means of relaxation.

They are, therefore, spontaneous and unencumbered by salon considerations. Many of them come from Sargent's latest period in the 1920's. Prendergast, whose *Central Park* is included in the exhibition, studied Impressionism in Paris. Yet, his pictures, often compared to mosaics and tapestries, never lose the characteristic American preoccupation with structure, light and clarity. His subjects, the gathering of people in a park and the horse and carriage, were those of the Impressionists. He translates the *Grand Jatte* into an American idiom and the scene takes place on the Charles River.

A curious figure, George "Pop" Hart, spread the Impressionist style of Sargent and others. He was a vagabond who painted everywhere, often using whatever material was available. *Morea* is painted on a piece of cardboard, possibly ripped from a box. On this he flowed the figures with a few strokes to produce the very free, spontaneous composition.

As French influence continued in the twentieth century, the more "Moderne" styles of Cubism and the Fauves replaced Impressionism as the model for American paintings. Charles Demuth, a native of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, reveals his Parisian Cubist training in the well-known *My Egypt* and other paintings of Pennsylvania or Provincetown. On the other hand, his *August Lilies* reveals his awareness of the Fauves. Like Demuth's other watercolors of fruit, vegetables and flowers, an elegance of line and sensitivity to color displaces the precise severity of his Cubist interests. Bowdoin's watercolor by Rockwell Kent of *Lobster Cove,* 1927, likewise illustrates the influence of Cubist art, although the long bands of color also show the influence of Art Deco which was the rage in avant-garde design after the Paris Exposition of 1926.

Painting in the 1930's was dominated by the interest of the Regionalist School of Thomas Benton, John Curry, Grant Wood and others. Although some watercolors reflect this trend, the traditional approach remained strong. Certain watercolorists became intensely interested in one special locale, a regionalism of sorts, but most artists were interested in several locations simultaneously. Scenes including areas of water (so beautifully captured in watercolor) remained popular, although cityscapes are conspicuous in this period. John Marin, for example, was inspired by both New York City and Maine. Bellows, Marsh, Burchfield, Peirce and Hopper often chose both city and rural subjects. Interesting parallels can be found in the biographies of these men. Painters like Burchfield and Pleissner were born in the city but took special pleasure in country scenes. Many were highly educated; Reginald Marsh attended Yale and Waldo Peirce attended Harvard.

The exceptional figure of this group is Edward Hopper. While a member of the "Main Street" realists group, he studied in Paris. Instead of joining the avant-garde in France, he developed a feeling for style and an interest in light there. To his European experience Hopper added a knowledge of commercial art. About 1924 he studied

graphics. His experience in Paris and work with commercial art and graphics combined to produce a new synthesis. The catalyst was Hopper's choice of subject matter. He examines alienation, rejection and separation. The result has influenced many watercolorists and given Hopper a place as significant as Homer's in the history of twentieth century American watercolors.

By the end of the third decade of the twentieth century, American watercolor broke free of the modernism which even persisted in the vaguely Art Deco work of the regionalists. Healy, Dehn, Marin, Burchfield and Pleissner emerged to characterize the currents of this period. Marin and Burchfield abstracted their subjects. While their inspiration arose from a particular place, the watercolor became more of a painting about their reaction to the place than a delineation of what they saw. Pleissner, like Hopper, emphasizes architecture. He is a keen observer of weather and atmosphere. He is a master of facile and controlled handling of watercolor. Like Cezanne, he has a particular skill in giving the white watercolor paper a vital role in the painting.

The onset of World War II and the war itself brought many European painters to America, especially those trained at the Bauhaus School. Their style, merged with native trends and inspired by their responses to America, is reflected in a whole line of works from Arshile Gorky to Frank Stella, including the great Abstractionists, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Mark Rothko, Hans Hofmann, Sam Francis and others.

Thus far the Bowdoin collection does not contain works in watercolor by this group. The collection has remained closer to the so-called realist tradition. Even though the abstract group demanded and got the attention of art historians, the realist tradition offered an equally viable means of expression. Today there is a renewal of the realist tradition, not in its old forms but conditioned to some extent by Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art and Hard Edge painting.

The collection of Eliot O'Hara demonstrates this point. A noted teacher and excellent watercolor artist himself, O'Hara gave to Bowdoin an extensive collection of contemporary works. These include pictures by Carl Schmalz, a former member of the Bowdoin Faculty, and Phoebe Flory which are in this show, along with pictures by Carol Bates, Olive Rush, Rex Brandt and many others. These pictures are realist works but as Eliot O'Hara stated, "A watercolor painting, like any other, doesn't need to be an accurate reproduction of a scene or still life. So, even the realistic painters do leave things out, distort shapes and colors and move subject matter around. Any distortion has to be motivated by some reason or interest. An artist isn't always content to tell you what a thing looks like, but will call your attention to something pertinent to his communication. He has noticed something and wants to call your attention to an object or situation that you might not have noticed."

According to O'Hara, Phoebe Flory described the *Church at Marfile, Mexico* as follows: "The chapel had

been stripped of its embellishments, even the flooring. This earthern interior suggested a dark pocket in the white plastered church that glowed with the sunlight reflected from outside. I was excited by the chapel's mysterious and earthy shadows that contrasted with the superficial decorations of the peeling and painted church." And Carl Schmalz recalled his painting of *Kent's Island* in these words: "This scene is along the rocky northeast shore. The spruces are somewhat deformed by the wind and spray. Their symbolic aspect moved me very much. To the left is the sea which barely shows in the picture. I wanted to make the effects of the ocean without referring specifically to it. The technique is a combination of a good deal of over-painting in glazed washes which relieve brilliantly lit edges of rock; pale dead branches and bunches of grass."

The most celebrated of these realist painters is Andrew Wyeth. In an interview with Richard Meryman, Wyeth said, "I really think *Brown Swiss* is one of my best things. And a lot of people, critics, said, 'It's good. Andy, but my eyes just go to that white house. It's almost falling off the left side.' That's just what I wanted — awkward, off balance. I remember I'd worked on the painting for months — to the point where I had all the literal truth, the workmanship, almost overstudied. But I'd never gotten wild during it — out of control — given it the fire I felt.

One evening just before dinner I mixed up a huge bowl of ochre color and raw sienna, very watery. Then I stepped back and threw it all over this huge painting, color dripping down. Then I rushed out. If I'd seen it drying all patchy, maybe, I'd have tampered with it — and doubted. The next morning I found I'd made it. I take terrible chances like that. Sometimes I miss and it's awful — chaos. But I'd rather miss sometimes and hit strong other times, than be an in-between person."

In a penetrating analysis of the same work, Wanda Corn, author of *The Art of Andrew Wyeth,* expresses Wyeth's description in art historical terms. "These paintings then, are not in the naturalistic traditions of the nineteenth century. Rather than the Impressionists' *plein-air* realism (canvases painted on location), for instance, theirs is a studio realism, often dependent on sketches done directly from nature, but with composition and color relationship worked out in the privacy of the atelier. So too with Wyeth, who is constantly adjusting relationships, simplifying and altering what he has seen to intensify the original visual experience. If we compare the painting *Brown Swiss,* for instance, with a recent photograph of the original site, Wyeth's studio alchemy is obvious. Pulling the hill up high behind the house and jigsawing the landscape into four lean triangles of alternating light and dark, he has created unsettling perfection and calm out of the fields and pond of a plain Pennsylvania farm."

Wyeth admits the influence of Homer and Hopper, but there are other ingredients. One is Wyeth's desire to express his own personal reaction to what he sees; the other is an awareness, or perhaps knowledge, of photog-

raphy. The angles, perspective, the microscopic and telescopic view achieved in photography seem to have conditioned Wyeth's vision. The watercolor has sometimes been an artists' snapshot and subjects are often picturesque. Perhaps this feature combined with Wyeth's adjustments to convey mood and feeling is what has made his work so popular.

The collection is still in the process of developing. This show, in fact, does not mark the end of a collection but is a demonstration of collecting in progress. We are adding six new watercolors to our collection — four are the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Carey; one is the gift of the children of Mr. William Zorach and one is a work commissioned by Bowdoin College from Samuel M. Green.

The Carey gift includes works by Persis Wallace, Georgia Wallace, Birdie Galbraith and Jimmie Mosely. Persis Wallace's work represents the mainstream of traditional American watercolor. She chooses subjects throughout the world, as is the case with *the Melon Vendor,* and treats them with a wistful romanticism. Georgia Wallace and Birdie Galbraith are young artists — both 30. Mosely, now Head of Art Education at Maryland State College, introduces figures into his watercolors. As a black artist, he is especially aware of human values and communicates this through the medium of watercolor. It is rare to see watercolor used in this way.

The Zorach picture was painted in 1963. The scene is one the artist knew well and the choice of locale epitomizes the deep impression the topography of Maine made on American artists of the twentieth century. Most spectacular is Zorach's use of color. Not surprisingly, the powerful blue strokes in the sky and sensuous yellow in the foreground are painted with the same rugged but flowing strength seen in his sculpture.

Half the exhibition is given over to the watercolors of Samuel M. Green. Why, one might ask, organize an exhibition along these lines — an unorthodox and perhaps unique treatment. First, the steps in the development of style and the ingredients of the content of the Museum's newest watercolor can be seen and understood. Second, Mr. Green's work is a microcosm of twentieth century watercolor itself. His watercolors are related to, and in part evolved from, the works of Healy, Demuth, Marin and Pleissner. At points he touches on Wyeth. His images are stark and compelling. His compositions are influenced by contemporary photography. In fact, a slide was the sketch for the new commission. There is also the shadow of Hopper in Green's work. Yet the pictures have their own style. They are not derivative. The elements are composed in their own way. They have a special *elegance* which sets them apart. This is not a word which has been used frequently in conjunction with watercolors. Sargent's work has a certain grace and Demuth's watercolors have been characterized as elegant. Pleissner, too, has a regal feeling. But none combine the sensuous richness of surface and decorative line seen in the Green pictures. This theme, the play of curved form against angles and line, is the most distinctive element in Green's work.

Mr. Green once remarked, "I guess I just like geometry." But, it is the contrast of this geometry against the almost rococo properties of the curvilinear forms which gives special excitement to his work. One can see this in the jigsawed brackets against weathered boarding, live oak tree branches against porch blinds, and the ripples of Casco Bay against a fishing pier. While Mr. Green's Vermeer-like treatment of architecture is striking, it is best seen when contrasted against lively curves.

In the future, it is hoped that the collection can be further expanded and refined. Certainly works by Prendergast, Marin, Demuth, Hopper and Burchfield, like those borrowed for the exhibition, must be acquired. In addition, works from the abstract American school should be represented. In reviewing Eliot O'Hara's collection, Dr. Philip C. Beam commented: "Like a library, a museum is constantly seeking to grow and to avoid remaining static. At the same time it wishes to develop in an orderly and logical fashion on two counts: by filling in where it is especially deficient and by acquiring or accepting only items which are of high quality or will be useful. The latter principle is invoked because every museum has a large number of prospective gifts offered to it every year which must be measured against display and storage space which is always limited and costly. Indeed, it has been said that a new museum would be well advised to begin by building a warehouse. Yet filling the warehouse with objects which he never can or will display is exactly what a director wants to avoid. Therefore, before a director acquires any work of art for the permanent collection, he tries to envision how, where, and how often he would display it. If it is a beautiful object and a significant addition to the collection, the problem would take care of itself; he would have a natural motive for exhibiting the work as much as possible." The motive of this exhibition is in large part exactly that — to display a collection of objects and to enjoy the beauty in them.

R.P.M.

[cover]
Samuel M. Green
Brooklin, Maine
watercolor, 23 x 33
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Louis O. Mink

[right]
Adolf Dehn (1895-1968)
Country Church, 1938
watercolor, 14¾ x 22 (sight)
Gift of Eliot O'Hara

Adolf Dehn 38.

[left]
Samuel M. Green (b. 1909)
Virgin, Guernica
watercolor, 13½ x 26
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. José D. Gómez-Ibáñez

[right]
Samuel M. Green (b. 1909)
Rocking Chairs (Porch at Beaufort, South Carolina)
watercolor, 29 x 25
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Rosenbaum

[left]
Winslow Homer (1836-1910)
The End of the Hunt, 1892
watercolor, 14¾ x 21 (sight)
Gift of the Misses Walker

[right]
Rockwell Kent (1882-1971)
Lobster Cove, 1927
watercolor, 9¾ x 13¾
Anonymous Gift

[left]
John La Farge (1835-1910)
Peak of Mona Roa
watercolor, 18 5/16 x 19 (sight)
Gift of the Misses Walker

[right]
Ogden Pleissner (b. 1905)
Early Snow, Leadville, 1944
watercolor, 18 x 27½ (sight)
Gift of Mr. John MacDonald

[left]
Andrew Wyeth (b. 1917)
Bermuda, ca. 1950
watercolor, 21 x 29 (sight)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Etnier,
in Memory of S. Foster
Yancey '30

CATALOGUE

All dimensions are in inches — height precedes width

CHARLES BURCHFIELD (1893-1967)
Railroad in November, 1953
watercolor, 22½ x 32¼
Lent by the Museum of Art of Ogunquit

ADOLF DEHN (1895-1968)
Country Church, 1938
watercolor, 14¾ x 22 (sight)
Gift of Eliot O'Hara

CHARLES DEMUTH (1883-1935)
August Lilies, 1921
watercolor, 11¾ x 17⅞
Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

JAMES ELLIOTT (b. 1919)
Force Nine
watercolor, 21 x 29
Museum Collection

PHOEBE FLORY
Church at Marfile, Mexico
watercolor, 23 x 17¾
Gift of Eliot O'Hara

BIRDIE GALBRAITH (b. 1943)
Hallelujah
watercolor, 24 x 30
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Carey

SAMUEL M. GREEN (b. 1909)
Harbor, 1973
watercolor, 22 x 29¼
Commissioned by Bowdoin College Museum of Art

River Port, 1953
watercolor
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Morton W. Briggs

House at Richmond, Maine, 1952
watercolor
Lent by Mrs. Victor L. Butterfield

Summer Cottage, 1955
watercolor
Lent by Dr. & Mrs. C. B. Crampton

November, Near Kent's Hill
watercolor, 20 x 12¼ (sight)
Lent by the Dartmouth College Collection, Hanover

Winter Quarters
watercolor, 30½ x 38¼
Lent by the Dartmouth College Collection, Hanover

South County Farm
watercolor, 36½ x 28½
From the Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Russell G. D'Oench, Jr.

West Rockport, Maine
watercolor, 18 x 21¾
Lent by the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Purchase—Louise E. Bettens Fund

Virgin, Guernica
watercolor, 13½ x 26
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. José D. Gómez-Ibáñez

Manhattan Bridge
watercolor, 21½ x 21½
From the Collection of the Artist

The Victorian Facade, Haverstraw, N.Y.
watercolor, 22¼ x 14⅞ (sight)
Lent by H. -R. Hitchcock

Brooklin, Maine
watercolor, 23 x 33
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Louis O. Mink

First Parish Church, Concord, Massachusetts, ca. 1958
watercolor, 21 x 28½
Lent by Professor & Mrs. Adolph F. Pauli

House, Cape May, 1973
watercolor, 22½ x 30
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Reed

Emma's Conf., 1973
watercolor, 35 x 34
From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Olin C. Robison

Poor White, ca. 1968
watercolor, 27½ x 32½
From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Olin C. Robison

Rocking Chairs, 1973
watercolor, 28½ x 24¾
From the Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Olin C. Robison

Rocking Chairs (Porch at Beaufort, South Carolina)
watercolor, 29 x 25
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. Rosenbaum

Woodshed Interior
watercolor, 21 5/16 x 14 5/16
Lent by the Smith College Museum of Art

Staircase
watercolor
Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wilbur

Antigua, Guatamala 1970
watercolor, 18 x 20½
Lent by Mr. Theodore Williamson

GEORGE ("Pop") HART (1868-1933)
Morea
watercolor, 14 x 18
Museum Collection

ARTHUR K. D. HEALY (b. 1902)
Bermuda Evening
watercolor, 22 x 14½
Gift of Mrs. James H. Beal

WINSLOW HOMER (1836-1910)
The End of the Hunt, 1892
watercolor, 14¾ x 21 (sight)
Gift of the Misses Walker

EDWARD HOPPER (1882-1967)
Methodist Church, Provincetown, 1930
watercolor, 25 x 19¾
Lent by the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection

ROCKWELL KENT (1882-1971)
Lobster Cove, 1927
watercolor, 9¾ x 13¾
Anonymous Gift

JOHN LA FARGE (1835-1910)
Peak of Mona Roa
watercolor, 18 5/16 x 19 (sight)
Gift of the Misses Walker

FRANCIS ORVILLE LIBBY (ca. 1883-1966)
Montego Bay, Jamaica
watercolor, 19¾ x 28¼
Gift of the Artist

JOHN MARIN (1870-1953)
Movement, Boat, Sea, Rocks, and Sky, Maine, 1941
watercolor, 15¼ x 21¾
Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

JIMMIE MOSELY, SR. (b. 1927)
Waiting to Vote, 1968
watercolor, 24 x 30
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Carey

ELIOT O'HARA (1889-1969)
Saints and Sinners, Rheims, 1959
watercolor, 28¾ x 21 (sight)
Gift of the Artist

OGDEN PLEISSNER (b. 1905)
Early Snow, Leadville, 1944
watercolor, 18 x 27½ (sight)
Gift of Mr. John MacDonald

MAURICE PRENDERGAST (1861-1924)
May Day, Central Park, ca. 1901
watercolor, 14⅜ x 21⅝
Lent by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

CARL N. SCHMALZ, JR. (b. 1927)
Kent's Island, New Brunswick
watercolor, 15 x 22 (sight)
Gift of Eliot O'Hara

GEORGIA WALLACE (b. 1943)
Assateague Island, Va.
watercolor, 15 x 23
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Carey

PERSIS WALLACE (b. 1935)
The Melon Vendor
watercolor, 22 x 28
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Carey

ANDREW WYETH (b. 1917)
Bermuda, ca. 1950
watercolor, 21 x 29 (sight)
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Etnier, in Memory of S. Foster Yancey '30

WILLIAM ZORACH (1887-1966)
The Cove (View from the Knubble), 1963
watercolor, 15 x 22
Gift of the Zorach Children

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Books exist on individual American artists who painted watercolors. John I. H. Baur's *Charles Burchfield* (MacMillan and Company, New York, 1956), Lloyd Goodrich's *Reginald Marsh* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1972) and Donelson F. Hoopes' *Eakins Watercolors* (Watson-Guptill Publications, New York, 1971) are examples of these important scholarly studies. Yet no academic book on the history of American watercolors has been written to date.

In 1966 Albert Ten Eyck Gardner published his *History of Watercolor Painting in America*. This book, written in conjunction with an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of the American Watercolor Society, contains important historical information on the role of the Society but is without footnotes and bibliography. An earlier treatment of the topic by Albert Gallatin, *American Watercolors* (E. P. Dutton and Company, New York, 1922), also is only an essay.

The best material on American watercolors is found in exhibition catalogues. A catalogue for the Whitney Museum of American Art by Alan Burroughs entitled "A History of Watercolor Painting" is a fine brief account up to 1942. Edward F. Weeks of the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama has updated the Burroughs' account in his catalogue, *American Watercolors 1850-1972*. Other catalogues have added certain dimensions to the topic: E. W. Garbisch's catalogue, *101 American Primitive Watercolors and Pastels* published in 1960 treated popular watercolors; Lloyd Goodrich considered the subject through the influence of a single artist in his catalogue, *American Watercolors and Winslow Homer;* the Brooklyn Institute of Art and Science exhibited the work of certain artists together in a show of 1921 called *A Group Exhibition of Watercolor Paintings by American Artists*. More recently, Larry Cury discussed the work of a selected number of artists in *Eight American Masters of Watercolor,* a catalogue of an exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Valuable information also is available through catalogues of dealers such as the Kennedy Galleries' *American Drawing, Painting and Watercolors* (New York, 1967), and through the annual exhibitions of the national and regional societies of watercolor artists. Among these are the American Watercolor Society Annual, West Coast Watercolor Society, California Watercolor Society, San Francisco Art Association Annual Watercolor Exhibition and the Springfield Missouri Art Museum's *Watercolor U.S.A., National Watercolor Competition* which began in 1962.

Another interesting source is the catalogues of several watercolor shows sponsored by the American State Department. Those at Colomba, Ceylon, in April 1955 and Manila, Philippines, in June 1955 are examples.

Handbooks on watercolor techniques are significant

to the study of American watercolors. One of the earlier examples is Eliot O'Hara's *Making Watercolor Behave* (Minton, Balch and Company, New York, 1932). More recently published is Ernest Watson's *Watercolor Demonstrated* (Watson-Guptill Publishers, Inc., New York, 1945). These reveal many salient points in the history of watercolor through their descriptions of procedures and processes. The O'Hara work is especially important, as he taught a great many students.

Finally, this essay is not meant to be a complete bibliography of the field, although one is needed. It is intended to aid those who wish to know more about watercolor and to encourage scholarship in this area.

R.P.M.

ON THE PAINTING OF SAMUEL GREEN

BUT THE LOVE OF THE OBJECT simply refuses to be repressed or expunged from the nature of man in his environment; and when we see it expressed in the work of such an artist as Samuel Green, we are reassured that man's relation to his environment will always have an external significance, however much the present age—the age of psychology, or even perhaps the age of psychiatry—has persuaded many observers that only the inner, the secret, human environment, retains significance for the artist in whatever medium.

Why has this painter—like others who readily come to mind—not chosen to give us his vision through the current styles approved by the subjectivists? He is an art historian, in addition to being a gifted painter. He has all the knowledge of the mode that anyone could ask. He has the taste and experience to know what is good and what bad in the many current expressions of the popular aesthetics of the day. Yet he is content to give us a world which he sees through the common medium of our common vision—with, of course, his own emotional and aesthetic commentary in terms of color, design, social compunction, and technical delight.

It is actually a matter of daring, for the moment, to see the present image of the world with as much technical learning and humanistic wisdom out of the past as a man can absorb for the foundation of his own particular response to life. The modern intellectualists declare with many voices that technology, science, society, in their extraordinarily swift permutations, must also affect the artist's idiom.

But those who make such claims, make, it seems to me, a naive error in analogy. For science and art, or technology and art, through both products of the highest faculties of man, do not utilize identical processes in the course of their highest realization. Science may be said to proceed through a series of premises each regarded in its turn as absolute, until overturned or modified by another. Art proceeds by rediscoveries through intuition of invariable human values. Stylistic variables do appear in the successive periods of art, yet they differ from science in that they are not subject to *demonstration*.

A powerful personality can seem almost divine in its powers of persuasion, and can seem to declare an immutable artistic style. For the most part, however, it is merely fashion, a contemporaneous vocabulary, a current slang of chic, which declares for each period what is to prevail and be accepted today, as if eternal in its aesthetic law.

But nothing could be more ephemeral than fashion, and in consequence, the oldest truths about art are at least as valid as the periodically exciting "discoveries" in artistic style, which are

always taken as final—only to be overturned in a season or two by commercial or academic tastemakers. What survives for everyone is the faculty of seeing a common world; and whatever the current mode, the truly gifted artist who sees what everyone else sees, yet who can represent it through his own genuine emotion as if with a sense of primal discovery, must always have relevance. Scientific discoveries are subject to change; every true discovery in art remains unchanged forever.

Samuel Green's genuine emotion seems to suggest the phrase "romantic intellectualism." He is moved by human evidence, and also by severities of patterns close to geometrical abstraction. It is as though he detects a theorem beneath the visible structure of his subject, and sets forth to demonstrate it by the loving depiction of what encloses it—the texture, color, air, light, atmosphere of the objective world. Among his most eloquent passages in his writing as an art historian are those devoted to architecture. What he expresses there by reference as a critic and historian he expresses directly as a painter. It is his individualism which makes the subjects of our common world his own. As he says in his masterful book, *American Art, A Historical Survey* (1966), "No picture could successfully project itself entirely on the basis of realism, no matter how expert and varied its instruments." What must be added?

Beyond technical control, there must be added the sense of creative response; love: and as all love is unique in its individual sensation, however commonly and repetitiously we feel its emotion, an artist who can make us feel his unique response to life through the recognizable object has added to realism another ingredient.

Mr. Green speaks of Kensett's "respect for fact, and his rejection of the pretentious and grandiloquent." Something of the same committed respect for rediscoveries of the world can be found in those habitat backgrounds in so many of Audubon's paintings of creatures, and we find it again in Mr. Green's captive visions of what things look like, as well as what he feels about them.

We are brought, then, to a reconsideration of one of Ruskin's most eloquent passages about this whole subject. In *Modern Painters,* he says, "The representation of facts . . . is the foundation of all art; like real foundations, it must be little of when a brilliant fabric is raised in it; but it must be there . . . And thus, though we want the thought and feelings of the artist as well as the truth, yet they must be thoughts arising out of the knowledge of truth, and feelings arising out of the contemplation of truth."

The truth and the feeling we find in the work of Samuel Green come to us through a self as aristocratically unobtrusive as it is keenly observant.

PAUL HORGAN